



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

BOARD OF VISITORS
UNITED STATES NAVAL ACADEMY
121 BLAKE ROAD
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21402-5000

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE U.S. NAVAL ACADEMY BOARD OF VISITORS

December 7, 2020

Virtual

Members present: Representative Ruppertsberger, Mr. Parker, Senator Cardin, Senator Sullivan, Senator Lankford, Representative Palazzo, Representative Banks, Representative Luria, Representative Brown, Mr. Spicer, RADM Walsh (ret), RDML Jackson (ret) and Mr. Hiler.

Congressman Ruppertsberger called the open session of the meeting to order at 1000 and conducted a roll call. Congressman Ruppertsberger welcomed the board members and visitors. At 1003 the minutes of the previous meeting of the Board were adopted by voice vote. Congressman Ruppertsberger delivered an opening statement to the Board in which he highlighted the importance of the health and safety of the midshipmen during the pandemic, acknowledged leadership of VADM Buck during this difficult time, pledged support of the Board to assist the Naval Academy during these challenging times, and reiterated the mission of the Board of Visitors. At 1007, Congressman Ruppertsberger yielded the floor to VADM Buck.

Superintendent's Update: Delivered by VADM Sean S. Buck, Superintendent, U.S. Naval Academy.

- **Opening Comments:** VADM Buck greeted the board and thanked them for their ongoing advocacy and support.
- **Summary of Events Since Last Board of Visitors:** VADM Buck reiterated his priorities during the COVID-19 pandemic, which is first to protect the safety and well-being of the midshipmen, faculty and staff, and local community, and second to continue to indoctrinate and commission officers for the Fleet to meet the needs of the Navy. VADM Buck provided an update since the last Board on the Naval Academy's COVID posture. He noted that Sentinel Suppression Testing proved invaluable at identifying and containing clusters of COVID on the Yard. When the Brigade experienced a slight uptick in COVID numbers, captured by the Sentinel Suppression Testing, leadership instituted a seven day "soft Restriction of Movement" (ROM) period to limit midshipmen interaction and therefore limit their "close contacts" until the outbreak was contained. VADM Buck also explained that he cancelled off-Yard liberty for the Thanksgiving holiday to ensure the Brigade remained healthy to travel home for Winter break mid-December. The midshipmen will have a four to five-week Winter Break period at home and

will return to Annapolis in waves to undergo COVID-19 testing and a ROM period prior to starting spring semester.

- **Hopper Hall and Center of Academic Excellence in Cyber Operations:** VADM Buck thanked the Board and Chairmen Ruppertsberger for their support over the years that led to the ribbon cutting ceremony on Hopper Hall on 15 October. VADM Buck noted every single midshipman will enjoy the facility for core classes in addition to the five majors that are housed in that building. He noted that the opening of Hopper Hall, and its classified learning spaces, is one of the key facets that allowed USNA to be named a Center for Academic Excellence in Cyber Operations by the National Security Administration.
- **Fall Sports:** VADM Buck explained that despite the stringent COVID-19 protocols outlined by Athletic Director Gladchuk at the last meeting, Navy managed to safely conduct 53 intercollegiate sporting matches across 17 different sports this fall.
- **USNA Institutional Effectiveness:** VADM Buck transitioned to providing an update on several metrics of Institutional effectiveness that USNA tracks. The first set of metrics tracked graduation rates overall as well as across several different demographics. VADM Buck explained that overall graduation rates have tracked upwards in recent years with the exception of Class of 2020 which had an unusually high number of conduct and honor violations. These trends held true when examining graduation rates by gender, race, and athletic participation. The Superintendent explained that USNA was doing a “deep dive” on the causal factors of USNA’s low graduation rates in 2020. He next showed several chartlets depicting Admissions specific information. He showed that the number of expected applications for Class of 2025 should exceed 16,000. The percentage of those applications that come from female and minority applicants has steadily increased over the last ten years. The number of fully qualified applicants hovers around 3,000 out of the 16,000 initial applications. The Naval Academy will typically make about 1,400 appointment offers and around 84% of Class of 2024 accepted their appointment. The Superintendent’s third set of chartlets examined academic trends. He described that USNA has shifted to a development model from an attrition model, particularly with academics, in recent years. The number of students who attrite due to academics, or have to attend an Academic Board, has steadily declined over the last ten years. He also noted that USNA is surpassing the requirement set by the Navy that 65% of graduates that commission as Naval officers must major in a STEM field. USNA is falling short of goals for international study abroad experiences since sequestration. These experiences are now entirely funded by philanthropic support. Lastly, the Superintendent talked about physical mission performance metrics. He noted that Navy teams have had winning records against Army and Air Force the last few years. He also showed that the Brigade-wide PRT pass rate remains around 98% despite challenging standards and very few midshipmen fail their body composition assessment.

- **Midshipmen highlights:** The Superintendent finished his remarks highlighting several exceptional midshipmen. First, he drew attention to the Naval Academy's first Black, female brigade commander in history, Midshipmen 1/C Sydney Barber, who spoke to the Board in September. He also noted that the Naval Academy had two students win prestigious international scholarships. Midshipman 1/C Lillian Usadi was named a Rhodes Scholar. Midshipman 1/C Quinn O'Loane was named a Marshall Scholar.

- **Questions:** Congressman Brown noted he had some comments and questions for the record. First, he showed concern for the dip in graduation rates for women and minorities in the Class of 2020 and looked forward to hearing the results of the "deep dive" on the issues with the Class of 2020. He reminded the Board that studies done in the Fleet show disparate treatment for minorities in UCMJ proceedings and asked that be kept in mind. He noted that he has phenomenal nominees for the Naval Academy Class of 2025 this year. He asked for guidance as to whether a student who attends NAPS requires a second nomination and pointed out that the informational packets provided to NAPS students encourage them to apply for a Congressional nomination a second time. He also asked for more guidance on whether or not USNA-affiliated personnel that write letters of recommendation should be considered any differently. Dean Latta answered both questions and said that NAPS candidates are encouraged to apply to every nomination source available, but they are eligible for a Secretary of the Navy nomination to USNA. He said letters from USNA-affiliated personnel should be weighed the same as any other letter of recommendation. Lastly, Congressman Brown noted the version of the National Defense Authorization Act in conference currently contains language that will create a uniform nomination portal across all three service academies. This portal will make it easier to track metrics such as race and ethnicity for service academy appointments. VADM Buck explained that the deep dive on conduct will occur under the guidance of Task Force USNA which is a part of CNO Gilday's Task Force One Navy charged with identifying unconscious bias in things like non-judicial punishment as well as many other areas.

Academic Update: Delivered by Dr. Andrew Phillips, Academic Provost. Provost Phillips provided an overview of hybrid-learning discussing the various options currently being utilized to instruct midshipmen in a socially-distant way. He noted the academic year started entirely online as students gradually returned to Annapolis and finished with many classes being held in a hybrid in-person and online method once appropriate technology was installed in the classrooms to allow for the new teaching style. He noted classes will start online in January while the midshipmen are in ROM following holiday leave. They will transition over the following two weeks with all classes being held in person by February. He noted despite the unusual circumstances, the Naval Academy has been recognized this year in several areas of academics. USNA was awarded the 2020 Senator Paul Simon Comprehensive Award for Campus Internationalization, named a Center of Academic Excellence in Cyber Operations by the NSA,

and named the #1 Top Public School for National Liberal Arts colleges by *US News and World Report*.

Brigade of Midshipmen Update: Delivered by Captain Thomas R. Buchanan. CAPT Buchanan discussed service selection results: 92.5% of the Brigade received their first or second service selection choice, 81.6% received their first choice, 25.4% of midshipmen selected into the Marines Corps, 94.3% of Navy selectees will go to Unrestricted Line communities, and 5.7% of Navy selectees will go into Restricted Line communities. The Commandant showed some metrics of the service selection numbers by demographic. He discussed the impact that lost training due to COVID-19 had on service assignment for Class of 2021 as well as to future classes. He explained eight midshipmen still lack their required summer training cruise for commissioning. USNA is requesting a waiver for these midshipmen. He noted that because Leatherneck occurred this summer as one of the only training opportunities, USNA saw an increase in interest in USMC with the Class of 2021. He explained Class of 2021 will not have PROTRAMID which is one of the greatest influencers of community interest. Class of 2023 and Class of 2024 still need to complete their commissioning cruise requirements. The Commandant noted that while the moratorium on Fleet engagement has been lifted, there still exist many challenges to conducting summer training in this environment. They are hopeful the vaccine will provide some relief this upcoming summer. Senator Sullivan asked about the commissioning requirements for USNA grads into the USMC compared to other sources. Senator Sullivan also asked if the Fleet was being uncooperative and if the BOV could be helpful in helping the Navy prioritize midshipmen summer training. The Commandant noted that Leatherneck training is conducted by USMC Officer Candidate School (OCS) staff and takes the place of OCS as a requirement for USMC-selects from USNA. He noted that the Fleet has indicated that they will prioritize midshipmen this summer and have provided some creative solutions to accommodate training. Senator Sullivan followed up and noted that at a Readiness hearing last week they were briefed on the stringent quarantine requirements used to accomplish OCS. He suggested that this might be a model for USNA and the Fleet to accomplish training.

NAPS Update: Delivered by CAPT James Bahr, Commanding Officer of the Naval Academy Preparatory School. Captain Bahr provided a brief overview of the structure and staffing of the Naval Academy Preparatory School in Newport, Rhode Island. The battalion is made up of approximately 250 Naval Academy Candidates and 25 Coast Guard Academy Candidates. The mission of NAPS is to provide a rigorous moral, mental, and physical development program for prospective cadets and midshipmen. He explained that NAPS helps provide geographic, racial, and ethnic diversity to the Brigade of Midshipmen. The NAPS to USNA matriculation rate is well above the required DOD minimum of 70%. On average, the USNA graduation rate of NAPS students is improving compared to the direct-entry USNA midshipmen. CAPT Bahr outlined the new United States Coast Guard Academy (USCGA) program in which NAPS trains 25 prospective USCGA cadets each year within the NAPS battalion. He also noted a program

that is in the planning phase called BOOST 2.0 which will allow ten students to attend NAPS prior to attending an Historically Black Colleges/University or Hispanic-Serving Institution NROTC program. Senator Cardin followed up on Congressman Brown's early questions regarding NAPS and asked for a strategy to best allocate nominations in high-demand areas such as Maryland. Dean Latta confirmed that the NAPS candidates are eligible for a Secretary of the Navy nomination.

Congressman Ruppersberger finished the meeting by asking the Athletic Director, Mr. Chet Gladchuk, to provide an overview of the Army Navy game. Mr. Gladchuk noted that while the game had been moved to West Point, the event would be treated like a "neutral venue" - the field and stadium have been configured to reflect a "neutral venue." He noted he has a high degree of confidence in the Navy team and it is going to be a great matchup that Navy should "expect to win."

Congressman Ruppersberger thanked the Superintendent for his leadership and comprehensive report. He adjourned the open portion of the meeting at 1200.

December 7th, 2020 Minutes Approved: C.A. Dutch Ruppersberger
Chairman, signed Jan 15, 2021